

## 1. Introduction



*Historic photo of life on the Reservation.*

The Flathead Indian Reservation was established by the terms of the Hellgate Treaty entered into by the United States and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes on July 16, 1855. U.S. Highway 93 traverses the Flathead Indian Reservation between its north and south boundaries for a distance of approximately 80 miles. The Montana Department of Transportation has proposed a reconstruction project for a 56-mile segment of the highway. In support of that proposed project, the U.S. Department of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration, the Montana Department of Transportation, and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes jointly endeavor to develop guidelines for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of U.S. Highway 93 which recognize and protect the Flathead Indian Reservation as the permanent homeland of the Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreille people. This endeavor will require a unified approach to design, detailing, maintenance, and interpretation. The following guidelines are the initial results of this endeavor.

The Design Guidelines and Recommendations define a collective vision of how the US 93 corridor from Evaro to Polson, Montana will be experienced by both locals and visitors.

## 2. Fundamental Design Considerations

The guiding philosophy for modification of U.S. Highway 93 is to protect cultural, aesthetic, recreational, and natural resources located along the highway corridor and to communicate the respect and value that is commonly held for these resources pursuant to traditional ways of the Tribes. The following objectives will be emphasized:

- Safely accommodate the present and future transportation needs of the citizens of Montana.
- Limit highway-related growth and development outside of established communities.
- Avoid construction in areas of traditional cultural and spiritual significance.



*Aerial photo of the potholes in the Ninepipe Wildlife Refuge.*

- Minimize intrusion and damage to natural resources located adjacent to the roadway.
- Enhance and restore natural resources that have been injured and/or disconnected by the existence of U.S. Highway 93, including:
  - ≤ hydrologic, lacustrine, riparian, and wetlands resources;
  - ≤ natural landforms and geologic features;
  - ≤ native vegetation and natural vegetative patterns; and
  - ≤ fish and wildlife habitat and migratory corridors.
- Provide safe and functional visitor use facilities at several locations along the highway.
- Develop guidelines for integrated roadside detailing, maintenance, signs, and interpretive concepts.

This document is intended to provide a foundation for the development of a unified and unique identity for U.S. Highway 93 on the Flathead Indian Reservation from Evaro to Polson, MT. The document primarily gives guidance at a conceptual level. It is a starting point for the development of final design details. Although safety and design standards will change over time, every reasonable effort should be made to assure that the spirit of the concepts presented here are manifest in the final design.

### 3. Design Guidelines

The intent of these guidelines is to provide designers, planners, engineers, and others involved with transportation-related activities on the Flathead Indian Reservation with a consistent design philosophy and design style. These recommendations are not intended to be rigid standards that limit creativity or produce standard one-size-fits-all details.

#### Design Theme



*Graphic logo depicting Coyote, legendary hero of the Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreille people.*

The design theme established for U.S. Highway 93 (US 93) on the Flathead Indian Reservation (Reservation) is “homeland of the *Sqélix*” “*Aq Ismakniké*” (traditional words in Salish and Kootenai for “the people”). This design theme is to be represented by an artistic logo depiction of Coyote. Coyote is a legendary hero in Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreille culture who prepared this landscape for inhabitation by all creatures and who continues to guide Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreilles people on their journey through this world. Accordingly, Coyote is a link between people and the Natural and Spiritual worlds in which this highway is being constructed and therefore represents the spirit of this place. The design theme is characterized by large-scale design elements of native materials, primarily contoured earth, quarried stone, and rough sawn timber and by small-scale design elements of Salish and Kootenai traditional beadwork patterns. This theme should continue to be the guide for modifications of site and architectural detailing and new construction throughout the length of the highway corridor.